

# **SPECIALTY AGRICULTURE**

## **UNIVERSITY RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM**

**SUPPORTING THE GROWTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
OF SPECIALTY AGRICULTURE ENTERPRISES IN VIRGINIA**

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**Guidelines, Instructions and Application**

**Fiscal Year 2009**

**Administered by**

**The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services**

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# **THE SPECIALTY AGRICULTURE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM**

## **Background**

In 2005, the Governor and the General Assembly created the Virginia Works Initiative to revitalize Virginia's rural economy. A major part of this Initiative involves the development and enhancement of specialty agriculture businesses that would provide opportunities for high value and value-added enterprises in rural Virginia. In conjunction and integrated with the economic development protocol for specialty agriculture is the need for Land Grant University Agriculture Research specifically directed to the development and viability of Specialty Agriculture opportunities. Thus, the Governor made available an appropriation of Specialty Agriculture Research funds to be used by Virginia Tech University and Virginia State University for applied commercialization research in Specialty Agriculture.

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) is charged with the development and implementation of the Specialty Agriculture Initiative. As part of that charge, VDACS will be administering the Specialty Agriculture Research Grants Program, and working closely with Virginia Tech and Virginia State in the development of Specialty Agriculture Research projects to support and enhance the economic development of Specialty Agriculture business ventures.

## **Intent of Program: Research Projects Accepted for Funding**

Priorities for use of Specialty Agriculture Research grant funds will include, but not be limited to, the following activities:

- Assisting farmers in transitioning into specialty, high value agricultural enterprises such as specialty crops and livestock, wood products, aquaculture, viticulture and other agricultural products
- Assisting farmers with improved production techniques for the development of specialty agriculture enterprises
- Increasing net farm income through high value or value-added enterprises
- Finding new ways to add value to specialty agricultural products
- Pilot and demonstration programs in specialty agriculture that have the potential for transferability within rural Virginia

## PART I: QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

### Application Requirements

- The application must be typed. Complete this form by either typing the information on the sheet provided or by completing the form in Microsoft Word by downloading this document from our web site at [www.vdacs.virginia.gov](http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov).
- Inquiries regarding the application process should be addressed to:  
Virginia Department of Agriculture Services  
Division of Marketing  
P.O. Box 1163, Richmond, Virginia 23218  
(804) 786-5447  
[charles.green@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:charles.green@vdacs.virginia.gov)
- Applications will be accepted via mail, electronic mail, express delivery or hand delivery to the VDACS office in Richmond. Include at least one signed, unbound original and five copies (applications should not be permanently bound or submitted in a notebook). Applications sent electronically via e-mail must also submit one hard copy with original signatures. Send applications to:
  - Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
P.O. Box 1163, Richmond, VA 23218
  - Electronically to [charles.green@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:charles.green@vdacs.virginia.gov)
  - ***Applications must be received by 5:00 pm on June 16, 2008 to be considered for this funding cycle.***

### Eligible Applicants

- Applications will only be accepted from Virginia Tech and Virginia State University research and extension faculty engaged in the development of specialty agriculture research activities.

## Non-Eligible Applicants and Uses of Funds

Applications will **NOT** be accepted for any of the following:

- Any request for reimbursement of expenses for activities completed prior to submission and approval of the application.
- Any request made by a for-profit entity or an individual, or any request for Specialty Agriculture Research grant funds to be granted directly to a for-profit entity or an individual.
- Requests to pay for essential government services normally paid for with general taxpayer funds, such as faculty salaries.
- Requests that seek to replace operational funding for ongoing projects that have suffered losses of state or federal funding, or to supplant other local, state or federal funding.
- Staff support needed to implement the project.
- Any request to pay for “indirect costs” associated with a research project.
- Researchers who have not submitted a written final report for previously funded research grants through VDACS, may be considered ineligible for submitting future research proposals under the program.

## Evaluation Criteria

Approval and scoring of applications will be based, in part, upon the following:

### **Specialty Agricultural Development Potential** (up to 35 points)

- Needs Assessment and Market Opportunities (up to 10 points for valid and clear appraisal of magnitude of specialty agriculture need or market opportunity to be addressed by a project)
- Number of Farms/Farmers Served, Assisted, Trained or “Converted” (up to 10 points on increasing scale as project moves from achieving greater awareness/education of opportunities to highest points for measurable conversion of farms to specialty agriculture, products, and markets)
- Creating Additional Net Income/Wealth (up to 15 points for project’s ability to add income and wealth to farmers, agribusinesses and organizations in Virginia from specialty agricultural products, markets or value-added opportunities.

**Technical Merit** (up to 35 points)

- Thoroughness and Clarity of Request (up to 10 points for assessment of needs and opportunities, budget documentation, qualified project management, etc.)
- Financial Feasibility and Project Readiness (up to 15 points for identification of appropriate sources of funds, status/commitment of those funds, reasonable outline and timeframe of steps for project implementation)
- Technical Feasibility and Innovation (up to 10 points for viable and creative solutions that may additionally have potential for transferability, including project design and management, partnerships, funding mechanisms, incentives, etc.)

**Significance to Long Term Sustainability of Virginia Agriculture** (up to 30 points)

- Regional or Statewide Significance (up to 10 points for documented philosophical support from a cross-sector of vested farms, agribusinesses or organizations within a multi-jurisdiction region, with increasing points for financial participation)
- Long Term Solutions (up to 10 points for long-term, measurable and sustainable solutions to specialty agriculture needs or opportunities identified by the project)
- Knowledge Transfer (up to 10 points for potential for transferability of methodology and technology throughout Virginia)

Applications that include matching funds will receive higher consideration than requests that are based solely on Specialty Agriculture Research Grant funds. Matching funds may include in-kind resources or direct cash contributions. While there is no required percentage of matching funds, any funds committed as matching funds must be spent concurrently with Specialty Agriculture Grant funds (i.e. past expenditures will not be counted as match). The submission of information regarding potential economic viability and marketability is strongly encouraged to demonstrate sound feasibility, management and sustainability.

## Application Review Process

Requests for funding will be reviewed by VDACS staff and presented to the Commissioner of Agriculture for final action.

## Term of Grant

Unless agreed to by the Commissioner of Agriculture, funding for all projects will be granted for one year only, and applicants must re-apply each year for ongoing projects. The accountability and reporting on the project during the year will serve as justification for continued funding. Funding in

one year, or for one phase of a multi-phase project, does not imply any future funding commitments.

Grant recipients agree to participate in at least one VDACS sponsored event, designed to disseminate knowledge gained through funded research to Virginia agricultural producers.

### **Project Extensions**

Requests to change the project completion date will only be considered under extenuating circumstances. Such requests must be submitted to VDACS 60 days prior to the project completion date.

## **Award Administration**

### **Acknowledgement of Support**

An acknowledgement of the Specialty Agriculture Grant Program must appear in any publication or any significant event based on this project. Terms should include “This project is supported in part by the Specialty Agriculture Grant Program, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.”

### **Payment of Grant Funds**

Upon final approval, all grantees must sign a Letter of Agreement stating that funds shall be used as described in the application. Funds are disbursed upon submission of a payment request form and adequate supporting documentation. Payments will be made by VDACS after receipt of properly completed reimbursement requests. Since projects include agriculture production systems and growing / livestock seasons do not necessarily conform to the Commonwealth of Virginia fiscal calendar, VDACS understands that a portion of work related to these important specialty agriculture research projects may extend beyond the end of the fiscal year, due to agricultural season limitations. VDACS must, however, work within the limitations of the fiscal calendar and all funds must be distributed within the limitations of the Commonwealth of Virginia fiscal calendar.

### **Reporting Requirements**

By signing the Letter of Agreement the grantee agrees to accountability and reporting requirements, including:

- A summary of total project costs and total amounts expended to date.
- Sources of funds expended.
- Details on how the funds from the Specialty Agriculture Grant were used.
- Objectives accomplished during the year, based on original application for funds.

- Status of the project and estimated time and cost for completion.
- Report of any potential problems which will prevent timely completion of project.

Failure to fulfill reporting requirements may be cause for withholding funding, withdrawal of funding or possible rejection of future proposals.

### **Audit and Reports**

Financial records, statistical records, supporting documents, and other records pertinent to this award shall be retained for a period of three years from submission of the Final Project Report. Records that relate to audits, appeals, litigation, or settlement of claims arising out of the performance of the project shall be retained until such audits, appeals, litigation, or claims have been disposed. The Auditor of Public Accounts or any of their duly authorized representatives shall have access to any pertinent documents, books, papers, and records of the recipient organization to make audits, examinations, excerpts, and transcripts.

### **Site Visits**

VDACS and the Auditor of Public accounts, through their authorized representatives, have the right, at all reasonable times, to make site visits to review project accomplishments and management control systems, and to provide such technical assistance as may be required.

### **Safeguarding Funds**

In no case will Specialty Agriculture Grant funds be commingled with the personal funds of, or be used for personal purposes by any officer, employee, or agent of the recipient; nor will any of these funds be deposited in personal bank accounts for disbursement by personal check.

### **Changes in Project Leader or Partners**

If any leader leaves the recipient organization or otherwise relinquishes control of the project, VDACS must be notified immediately. Transfer of the award to other organizations must be reviewed and approved by VDACS.

### **Withholding Payments**

VDACS reserves the right, upon written notice, to withhold future payments after a specified date if the recipient fails to comply with the conditions of the award, including reporting requirements. VDACS reserves the right to request that grant funds be reverted to VDACS, if funds are used for purposes not consistent with those outlined in the project application.



## PART II: Instructions for Completing Application

Each proposal should include the following documents. Complete *all* information requested. Proposals that are incomplete and do not satisfy all the requirements are at risk of being disqualified and returned to the proposing organization without review. Each proposal must be in the following format with numbered pages:

Title Page

Project Summary, Including Anticipated Timeline

Specialty Agriculture Research Outcomes

Financial Information: Sources of Funds.

Financial Information: Budgeted Expenditures

Authorization

Attachments, including:

- \* Up to three pages of additional Project Description and other relevant graphics
- \* Biographical sketches of Lead Project Personnel
- \* Letters of support

### I. Title Page

The project title should be instructive, focused on the proposal and limited to 50 characters.

The total amount of funds requested must agree with the total line of the budget page.

Signatures of the Project Leader and Chief Executive/Official of the organization are required.

### II. Project Summary

In the space provided, describe the proposed project in layman's terms and suitable for distribution to the public. Do not include any proprietary information. The summary should provide a brief and clear description of the proposed project, and should **clearly indicate the uses/purposes for which Specialty Agriculture Grant funds will be used.**

Include the following: the problem, opportunity or need that will be addressed; the broad, long-range objectives of this project; the specific steps needed to successfully implement the project; the significance of the project to specialty agriculture development; and a basic timeline of the work to be completed.

Up to three additional pages describing the project may be included in the Attachments, but do not repeat information provided on the Project Summary page.

### III. Specialty Agriculture Development Outcomes

The specialty agriculture development outcomes must be described in detail in the space provided on this page, and should demonstrate how the anticipated effects of the research project are consistent with the development of high value or value-added specialty agriculture enterprises in Virginia. The outcomes should also be consistent with the long term objective of enhancing and sustaining the economic viability of Virginia agriculture through diversification from commodity-based agribusiness to high value consumer products. The project should measurably address the needs and opportunities of specialty agriculture enterprise development, including the following:

- Describe the direct and indirect benefits that can be expected to result from the project.
- Provide the amount of increased investment, potential income, number and quality of jobs and overall estimated value as a result of the research project (e.g. projected wages or salaries, type of work involved, skills required, etc.).
- Provide the potential number of farmers and agribusinesses served by the project.
- Indicate how the project could stimulate future specialty agriculture growth in Virginia
- Indicate plans for disseminating results of the research to Virginia agricultural producers.

#### **IV. Financial Information: Sources of Project Funds**

While there is no minimum required percentage of matching funds, the project should include funding from other sources and those funds must be used concurrently with program funds (project funds spent in previous years are evidence of commitment, but will not be considered a current match). Requests should convey that:

- ✓ other appropriate sources of funds have been, or will be, secured
- ✓ Specialty Agriculture Research Grant funds have been leveraged to the maximum extent possible, and
- ✓ future funding sources are sufficient to ensure sustainability of the project.

All project monies, whether received from another state agency or agencies, federal funds, local contributions or private investments, must be listed on this page. “Private investments” may include sources such as private equity, bank financing and fundraising contributions. “Other sources” may include earned interest or income, fees generated, in-kind contributions, etc. Indicate the purpose for which funds from other sources will be used, and the status of the funds (e.g. applied for, awarded, in-hand, reimbursable).

#### **V. Financial Information: Budgeted Expenditures**

Each application must provide a detailed budget based on the information requested in the Application, as applicable to each request. Budget subheadings have been provided. The budget form contains columns to indicate where the amount requested from Specialty Agriculture Research funds will be used, as opposed to funds received from other sources.

If start-up operating costs are being requested for a multi-year project, clearly indicate in the Budget Narrative how other sources of funds will be secured in order to pay for operating costs beyond the start-up period.

\* (annual operating costs include these line items on the budget page: personnel services; contractual services; continuous charges; and supplies and materials)

**Budget Narrative:** Include a page of narrative providing additional explanation of how, when and by whom the various sources of funds will be obtained and managed, the use of funds received from each source, budgets for distinct elements of a project and the long-term sustainability of the project.

## **VI. Authorization**

No application will be accepted without a signed resolution from a representative of the entity making the application, authorizing submission of the application and stating that the person signing on behalf of the applying entity is accepting responsibility for the accuracy of the application and for the appropriate use of funds, should they be granted.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

## **VII. Additional Project Description**

In addition to information provided in the Project Summary, additional project description of no more than 3 pages (typed, double spaced) may include the following, plus any relevant graphics. Do not repeat information provided in the Project Summary.

- Additional description of the specialty agriculture research project and its projected impact
- Evidence of the need for the project and the support of the agriculture community to be served by it
- Additional summary of the project's objectives, anticipated outcomes and a timetable for meeting stated objectives
- Any relevant graphics such as statistical charts, photographs, etc. may be submitted, but should be letter size (8 1/2" by 11") and easily reproducible.

## **VIII. Biographical Sketches**

- Provide a Curriculum Vitae, resume, or biographical sketch of each person who has primary responsibility for developing and implementing the proposal.

- Information should clarify each person's project responsibilities, and highlight their qualifications to complete the research.

## **IX. Letters of Support**

Attach letters providing evidence of support for the project.

# I. Application for FY09 Specialty Agriculture Research Grant - Title Page

<b>Project Title</b> (No more than 50 characters)		
<b>Name of Organization</b>	<b>Address of Organization</b>	
<b>Employer Identification Number</b>		
<b>PROPOSAL INFORMATION</b>		
<b>Requested Start Date:</b>	<b>Anticipated End Date:</b>	<b>Fiscal Year-End Date:</b>
<b>Requested Amount:</b>	<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	
Is this proposal being submitted to another funding agency (State or Federal): <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If Yes, specify:		
	<b>PROJECT LEADER</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>
<b>Full Name</b>		
<b>Title</b>		
<b>Organization</b>		
<b>Telephone Number</b>		
<b>Fax Number</b>		
<b>E-Mail Address</b>		
<b>Mailing Address</b>		
<b>Web Site Address</b>		
<b>Signature</b>		
<b>Date</b>		

## II: Project Summary:

Describe on this page the project for which you are requesting funds from the Specialty Agriculture Grant Program. Include all of the information requested in the Filing Instructions, including a clear description of how Grant funds will be used. Up to three additional pages of description may be included as an attachment.

<b>Project Title:</b>	

### **III. Specialty Agriculture Development Outcomes**

Describe on this page how your project will positively impact the economic opportunities for specialty agriculture in Virginia. Also, indicate plans for disseminating results of the research to Virginia agricultural producers. Include all information requested in the Filing Instructions, including the specific methods and measures by which your project's effectiveness may be evaluated against needs or opportunities that will be addressed.

#### IV. Financial Information: Sources of Funds

##### Other Funding:

##### Sources, Amounts, Status and Purpose

###### State

Agency Name:

Amount Received:

\$

Status

Purpose

###### State

Agency Name:

Amount Received:

\$

Status

Purpose

###### Federal

Agency Name:

Amount Received:

\$

Status

Purpose

###### Local

Name of Locality:

Amount Received:

\$

Status

Purpose

###### Private

Source(s):

Amount of Investment:

\$

Status

Purpose

###### Other

Source(s):

Amount of Investment:

\$

Status

Purpose



**Explain how, when, and by whom these sources of funds will be obtained and managed:**

## V: Financial Information: Budgeted Expenditures

Use this page to show the amount of each project activity that will be accomplished using Specialty Agriculture Research funds, as opposed to funds received from other sources. Use the Budget Narrative on the next page to describe how these funds will be used, provide additional detail for distinct elements of the program, clarify future sources of operating funds, and explain how the estimated expenditures were determined.

### Proposed Project Budget

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Beginning Date of Budget Period

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Ending Date of Budget Period

	Spec. Ag. Funds	State	Federal	Local	Private	Other* (in-kind etc.)	Total
<b>Personnel Services</b> (Salaries, Wages, Benefits)	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
<b>Contractual Services</b> (A&E, legal, telecom, printing, media, travel, training)							
<b>Supplies and Materials—</b>							
<b>Transfer payments</b> (grants, scholarships, loans, etc.)							
<b>Continuous Charges</b> (insurance, lease payments, utilities)							
<b>Property &amp; Improvements</b> (land acquisition, site development, etc.)							
<b>Equipment</b> (computers, phones, furniture, fixtures, manufacturing equipment)							
<b>TOTAL COSTS:</b>	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

**\* Other/in-kind contributions must be described in the Budget Narrative.**

**Budget Narrative:** Describe how these funds will be used, provide additional budget detail for distinct elements of the program (e.g. field research versus special equipment), clarify future sources of operating funds, and explain how the estimated expenditures were determined.

## **VI. Authorization**

By signing this Application, the Authorizing Agent is guaranteeing that the information contained in this Application is correct and verifiable. The Authorizing Agent is also affirming that the funds requested herein will be used for the specific purpose outlined in this Application and for no other purpose. (Attach a resolution of the governing body of the applicant organization authorizing this person to submit the application in the name of the organization.)

Name of Requesting Entity: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Authorizing Agent: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Authorizing Agent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Authorizing Agent: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Authorizing Agent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***SUBMISSION ATTACHMENTS***

## **VII. Additional Project Description**

Additional project description is limited to three double-spaced, typed pages, plus any relevant graphics. See Instructions for details, but do not repeat information provided in the Project Summary. In addition to typed narrative:

- a map showing the project location if project is located on a University research farm or at an off-campus (on-farm) location is encouraged.
- other relevant graphics such as statistical charts, photographs, site map, etc. are also encouraged, but should be letter size (8 1/2" by 11") and easily reproducible.

## **VIII. Biographical Sketches**

Provide a Curriculum Vitae, resume, or other description of each project manager's qualifications. See Instructions for details.

## **IX. Letters of Support**

Attach letters providing evidence of support for the project.